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[THREAD]

What led to the Fall of Constantinople in 1453?

It wasn't the Ottoman muslim turks. The Byzantine Empire was rotting within for centuries due to its false sense of security and a series of miscalculations. We'll explore how it went from roses to rot.

(1/51)



In 324 CE, Rome was in decay. Emperor Constantine I decided to move the capital of the Roman Empire to the ancient city of Byzantium to revive Europe into a Christian Empire. He rebuilt and beautified the capital, which was renamed Constantinople.

(2/51)

Byzantium

The fifty-two year old Constantine was now the sole emperor of the empire and with it a sense of stability returned. Constantine realized that Old Rome was not the city he wanted for a capital, and despite several of the building projects he instituted, it was decaying. Rome was no longer practical (Constantine even disbanded the Praetorian Guard), and Nicomedia was never considered, for it had been the capital of Diocletian. A new capital was needed, and although he thought about the site of ancient **Troy**, Constantine finally saw what he wanted - Byzantium. The ancient city was strategically located on the European side of the Strait of Bosphorus, so it would control traffic to and from the Black Sea. It also provided an excellent harbor (The Golden Horn) and, therefore, could be easily defended.

To rebuild the city into the one in his vision, he brought in artisans and resources from across the empire. There were wide avenues with statues of **Alexander**, Caesar, Augustus, Diocletian, and of course, Constantine. He rebuilt the walls, built cisterns, Christian churches (Hagia Irene) and pagan temples. It was a city that remained classical yet inspired by a Christian god. In 330 CE the city was finally dedicated.

ancient.eu/Constantine_I/



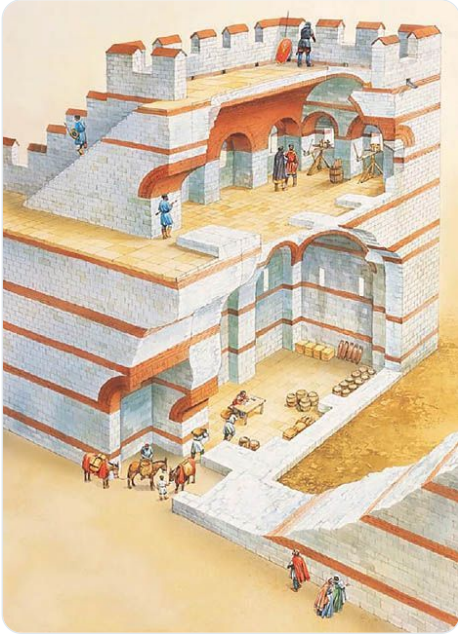
The strategic location of Constantinople facilitated trade with the west & the resource-rich Asia minor. The presence of hills along with the waterfront was perfect for irrigation and was an added layer of defense. Its accessibility also made it vulnerable to invasions.

(3/51)



The fortification of the new Roman capital was comprised 5-m thick inner wall standing 12-m and a 2-m thick outer wall. There was a 20-m wide 10-m deep moat, which stored and conveyed water into the city. Advanced masonry technique made the walls earthquake-resistant.

(4/51)



The Theodosian Walls consist of the main inner wall (μέγα τεῖχος, *mega teichos*, "great wall"), separated from the lower outer wall (ἐξω τεῖχος, *exo teichos* or μικρὸν τεῖχος, *mikron teichos*, "small wall") by a terrace, the peribolos (περίβολος).^[41] Between the outer wall and the moat (ὄχλος, *ochlos*) there stretched an outer terrace, the parateichion (παρατείχιον), while a low breastwork crowned the moat's eastern escarpment. Access to both terraces was possible through posterns on the sides of the walls' towers.^[42]

The inner wall is a solid structure, 4.5–6 m thick and 12 m high. It is faced with carefully cut limestone blocks, while its core is filled with mortar made of lime and crushed bricks. Between seven and eleven bands of brick, approximately 40 cm thick, traverse the structure, not only as a form of decoration, but also strengthening the cohesion of the structure by bonding the stone facade with the mortar core, and increasing endurance to earthquakes.^[43] The wall was strengthened with 96 towers, mainly square but also a few octagonal ones, three hexagonal and a single pentagonal one. They were 15–20 m tall and 10–12 m wide, and placed at irregular distances, according to the rise of the terrain; the intervals vary between 21 and 77 m, although most curtain wall sections measure between 40 and 60 meters.^[43] Each tower had a battlemented terrace on the top; its interior was usually divided by a floor into two chambers, which did not communicate with each other. The lower chamber, which opened through the main wall to the city, was used for storage, while the upper one could be entered from the wall's walkway, and had windows for view and for firing projectiles. Access to the wall was provided by large ramps along their side.^[44] The lower floor could also be accessed from the peribolos by small posterns. Generally speaking, most of the surviving towers of the main wall have been rebuilt either in Byzantine or in Ottoman times, and only the foundations of some are of original Theodosian construction. Furthermore, while until the Komnenian period the reconstructions largely remained true to the original model, later modifications graced the windows and embrasures on the upper store and focused on the lower terrace as the sole fighting platform.^[45]

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walls_of_Constantinople

⁴¹ ↑ van Millingen 1899, pp. 58–59.

⁴² ↑ Turnbull 2004, pp. 15–15; Philipides & Hanioti 2011, p. 309.

⁴³ ↑ "From 'typical' to the 'Chicago tower': Earthquake resistant masonry construction (EMEC) 2". *EMEC*. 2015. constantinople.com. Retrieved 28 March 2016.

⁴⁴ ↑ Turnbull 2004, pp. 12–12; Philipides & Hanioti 2011, pp. 307–308; Steve Rath & Schweizer 1943, pp. 28–31.

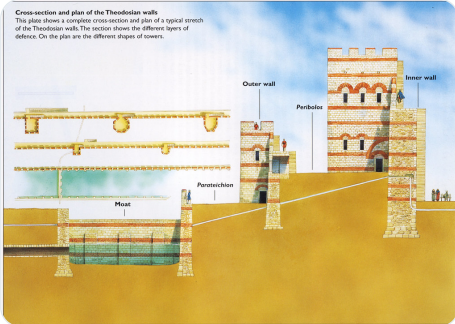
⁴⁵ ↑ ↑ Turnbull 2004, p. 12.

• Meyer-Rath, Beate, *Stadtbefestigung: Mauer (1943)*, Die Landmesser von Konstantinopel, Teil II (in German), Berlin: W. de Gruyter & Co.

• Philipides, Maria; Hanioti, Vasiliki, (2011), *The Walls and the Fall of Constantinople in 1453: Historiography, Topography and Military Studies*, Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., ISBN 978-1-4091-1044-5.

• Turnbull, Stephen (2004), *The Walls of Constantinople AD 324–1453: Fortress Series 23*, Osprey Publishing, ISBN 1-85176-726-X.

• van Millingen, Alexander (1899), *Byzantine Constantinople: The Walls of the City and Adjacent Historical Sites*, London: John Murray & Co.



The tall rigid walls made with carefully-cut limestone bricks complemented by the 96 high watch towers (only 62 stand today) resisted scores of raids over the centuries and that included invasions from the arabs, turks, and mongols.

(5/51)

The outer wall was 2 m thick at its base, and featured arched chambers on the level of the peribolos, crowned with a battlemented walkway, reaching a height of 8.5–9 m.^[46] Access to the outer wall from the city was provided either through the main gates or through small posterns on the base of the inner wall's towers. The outer wall likewise had towers, situated approximately midway between the inner wall's towers, and acting in supporting role to them.^[45] They are spaced at 48–78 m, with an average distance of 50–66 m.^[43] Only 62 of the outer wall's towers survive. With few exceptions, they are square or crescent-shaped, 12–14 m tall and 4 m wide.^[44] They featured a room with windows on the level of the peribolos, crowned by a battlemented terrace, while their lower portions were either solid or featured small posterns, which allowed access to the outer terrace.^[45] The outer wall was a formidable defensive edifice in its own right: in the sieges of 1422 and 1453, the Byzantines and their allies, being too few to hold both lines of wall, concentrated on the defence of the outer wall.^[45]

The moat was situated at a distance of about 20 m from the outer wall. The moat itself was over 20 m wide and as much as 10 m deep, featuring a 1.5 m tall battlemented wall on the inner side, serving as a first line of defence.^[45] Transverse walls cross the moat, tapering towards the top so as not to be used as bridges. Some of them have been shown to contain pipes carrying water into the city from the hill country to the city's north and west. Their role has therefore been interpreted as that of aqueducts for filling the moat and as dams dividing it into compartments and allowing the water to be retained over the course of the walls. According to Alexander van Millingen, however, there is little direct evidence in the accounts of the city's sieges to suggest that the moat was ever actually flooded.^[47] In the sections north of the Gate of St. Romanus, the steepness of the slopes of the Lycus valley made the construction maintenance of the moat problematic; it is probable therefore that the moat ended at the Gate of St. Romanus, and did not resume until after the Gate of Adrianople.^[48]

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walls_of_Constantinople

⁴² ↑ ↑ Turnbull 2004, p. 13.

⁴³ ↑ Philipides & Hanioti 2011, p. 309.

⁴⁴ ↑ Philipides & Hanioti 2011, p. 309.

⁴⁵ ↑ ↑ Runciman 1989, p. 91.

⁴⁶ ↑ van Millingen 1899, pp. 58–59.

⁴⁷ ↑ van Millingen 1899, pp. 58–59.

⁴⁸ ↑ Philipides & Hanioti 2011, pp. 309–310.

⁴⁹ ↑ Turnbull 2004, p. 12.

• Philipides, Maria; Hanioti, Vasiliki, (2011), *The Walls and the Fall of Constantinople in 1453: Historiography, Topography and Military Studies*, Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., ISBN 978-1-4091-1044-5.

• Runciman, Steven (1989), *The Fall of Constantinople: 1453*, Cambridge University Press, ISBN 978-0-521-38522-8.

• Turnbull, Stephen (2004), *The Walls of Constantinople AD 324–1453: Fortress Series 23*, Osprey Publishing, ISBN 1-85176-726-X.

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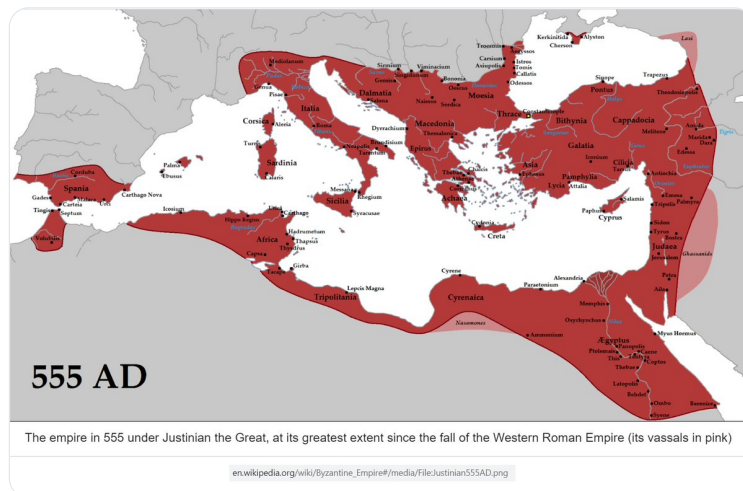
Theodosius II fortified the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire with new walls 18 meters high to prevent the invasion of the Huns led by Uldin, which advanced towards Thrace. These impenetrable walls that seemed to resist and defend the capital for eternity. In 425, Theodosius founded a university near the Taurus Forum. While Rome decayed and was plundered by Visigoths of Alaric, even by Genseric's vandals, or directly threatened by Attila's Huns, the walls of Constantinople had proved impenetrable and no "barbaric" population dared to storm the prosperous capital due to its close ties with the rich. Eastern Provinces.



medium.com/history-of-yesterday/the-history-of-constantinople-69a73731c144

Given the common occurrences of wars and disputes, maps and borders of territories fluctuated. The Roman empire of 555 AD, with its capital being Constantinople, reached its height of expansion as shown...

(6/51)



Constantinople had a booming agricultural-based economy that produced ample food

for trade & self-sustenance. There were farms within and beyond the walls; a lot of them owned & operated by churches. The Golden Horn provided ample supply of fish for the seafood trade.

(7/51)

At the same time the economy had expanded dramatically, mostly generated by several decades of peace in the regions around the city. The farms of Thrace and Bithynia poured foodstuffs into the city and even produced surpluses for trade. Merchant ships moved from port to port buying them up and selling them in cities along their way. Constantinople was a city-state that prospered when its immediate hinterland did, there may have been a period of exceptional positive climate conditions that increased yields of grain and oil. The seas around the city were always the primary source of protein for the city, its fishermen delivered tons of fresh seafood to its docks every day from hundreds of boats. Vegetables and fruits were grown in the city and outside the walls, producing more than the city could consume. Bread was a staple of the daily menu that was milled and then baked in large commercial operations. Bread and fish were the essentials that kept the city going.

Many of the farms and most of commercial ventures in the city were owned by either the imperial court or one of the great churches and monasteries. There were 20,000 or more civil employees who worked for the state, most of these activities were centered within the grounds of the Great Palace. Most state employees were catered their meals on the job in the palace, where there were kitchens and bakeries working non-stop to feed them and the courtiers attached to the court itself. There were also several thousand members of the Imperial guards who were fed by the state and a large number of them were housed in barracks within the gates of the Great Palace. All of these people not only ate but they drank large amounts of wine and beer everyday.

pallasweb.com/denis/great-palace-of-constantinople-12th-century.html



Workers on the field (down) and pay time (up), Byzantine Gospel of 11th century.

Unknown/Anonymous - Byzantine gospel, Paris, National Library.

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byzantine_economy#/media/File:Byzantine_agriculture.jpg

The beautiful Christian capital was filled with so many visual delights that provided a heavenly ambiance. Visitors often gazed in awe of the many captivating monasteries, palaces, displays of ancient and religious relics, gardens, and colonnaded streets.

(8/51)



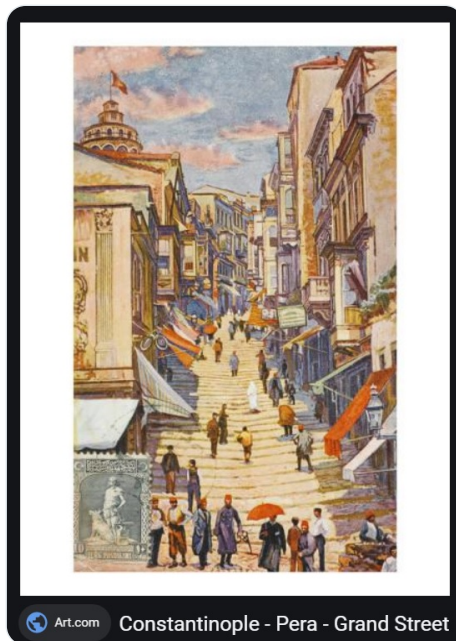
Pinterest

The Senate House of Magnaura, Constantinople.



Constantinople was full of life as it facilitated districts filled with shops on marbled streets and staircases leading to different levels of the city accompanied by roofs. Women were the driving force in running these shops and free to sell many artistic goods.

(9/51)



On the right is a tiny 6th century Byzantine cosmetics jar made of ivory and gold. The handle is a gold cupid.

It is estimated that Constantinople at its height in the 12th century had 2,600 shops lining the main streets averaging 32 x 20 feet in size. Hagia Sophia owned 1,100 of them in the time of Justinian. Can we guess that Constantinople had close to 50 shops that sold perfumes, rose water and rose oil?

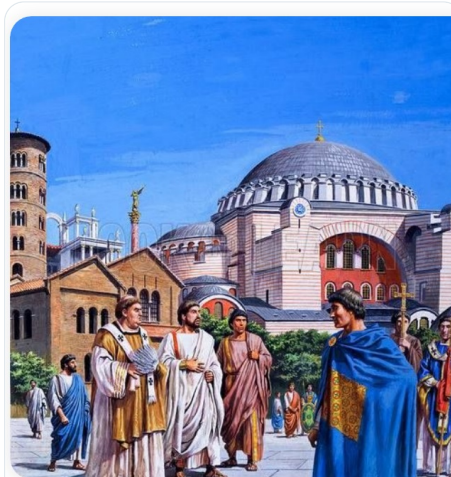
Byzantine shops were built of brick, around 33 ft (10m) wide and 22 ft (7m) deep. They had wide openings onto the Mese - the main shopping street of Constantinople - marble framed doorways and floors of both marble and tile. Doors were left open so potential shoppers could see the products for sale inside, and other wares were displayed in front of the doors. Shops had basements and water basins. Stairs lead up to a second floor. There were frequent fires, so stores were often rebuilt over the years. The Mese - and most of the shopping streets - were paved with marble. Many had colonnades with staircases leading to roofs decorated with sculptures that operated like open promenades. The Mese had hanging street lamps to accommodate evening shoppers that were paid for by the city government. In 1332 the famous Muslim traveler, Ibn Battuta, visited the 'bazaar' of Constantinople and remarked that all the shops were run by women and the artisans who made things for the shops were also women. He also tells us the streets and bazaars were paved with flagstones and very spacious.



pallasweb.com/decsis/the-roses-of-constantinople.html

In 532 AD, Emperor Justinian decided to reach new architectural achievement to pay tribute to God and ordered the construction of what will be considered one of the most beautiful churches the world has ever seen.

(10/51)



Emperor Justinian in the streets of Constantinople, by Roger Payne.

Saved from pbs.twimg.com

pinterest.com/pin/40743571613239140/

The Hagia Sophia was built in less than 6 years. Its external magnificence is attributed to a beautiful towering 105-foot dome. The inside was even more impressive with acres of beautiful gold mosaic and wealth of colored marbles.

(11/51)



ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA

The Hagia Sophia was built in the remarkably short time of about six years, being completed in 537 CE. Unusual for the period in which it was built, the names of the building's architects—Anthemius of Tralles and Isidorus of Miletus—are well known, as is their familiarity with mechanics and mathematics. The Hagia Sophia combines a longitudinal basilica and a centralized building in a wholly original manner, with a huge 32-metre (105-foot) main dome supported on pendentives and two semidomes, one on either side of the longitudinal axis. In plan the building is almost square. There are three aisles separated by columns with galleries above and great marble piers rising up to support the dome. The walls above the galleries and the base of the dome are pierced by windows, which in the glare of daylight obscure the supports and give the impression that the canopy floats on air.

[britannica.com/topic/Hagia-Sophia](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Hagia-Sophia)

“It seems not to rest upon solid masonry but to cover the space beneath as though suspended from heaven.” – Procopius, a prominent Byzantine Greek scholar

(12/51)



“We knew not whether we were in Heaven or earth. For on earth there is no such splendor and beauty, and we are at a loss to describe it. We only know that there God dwells among men.” – an ambassador from Kiev

(13/51)



Hagia Sophia wasn't the only beautiful expression of their devotion to God. There were at least 48 churches and monasteries built in Constantinople. Those include the Chora Monastery, Zoodochos Pegé, and Pantokrator, just to name a few.

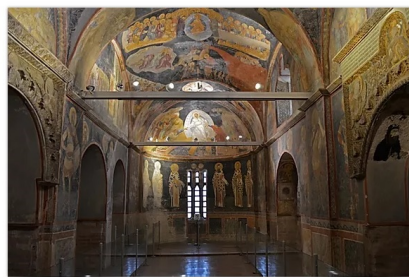
(14/51)



Church of Zoodochos Pigi



<https://www.thebyzantinelegacy.com/churches>



Chora

In Constantinople, Christianity was not only a religion, it was a way of life with its daily prayers and nightly vigils.

(15/51)

Byzantium was not only the last heir to the Roman Empire, it was also the first Christian nation. From its founding, the capital city was conceived as the replica of heaven, a manifestation of the triumph of Christ, and its emperor was considered god's vice-regent on earth. Christian worship was evident everywhere: in the

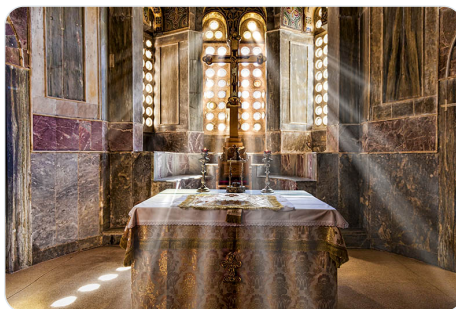
raised domes of the churches, the tolling of bells and wooden gongs, the monasteries, the huge number of monks and nuns, the endless parade of icons around the streets and walls, the ceaseless round of prayer and Christian ceremony within which the devout citizens and their emperor lived. Fasts, feast days, and all-night vigils provided the calendar, the clock, and the framework of life. The city became the storehouse of the relics of Christendom, collected from the Holy Land and eyed with envy by Christians in the West. Here they had the head of John the Baptist, the crown of thorns, the nails from the cross, and the stone from the tomb, the relics of the apostles, and a thousand other miracle-working artifacts encased in reliquaries of gold and studded with gems. Orthodox religion worked powerfully on the emotions of the people through the intense colors of its mosaics and icons, the mysterious beauty of its liturgy rising and falling in the darkness of lamplit churches, the incense and the elaborate ceremonial that enveloped church and emperor alike in a labyrinth of gorgeous ritual designed to ravish the senses with its metaphors of the heavenly sphere. A Russian visitor who witnessed an imperial coronation in 1391 was astonished by the slow-motion sumptuousness of the event:

Roger Crowley (2013). 1452: The Holy War for Constantinople and the Clash of Islam and the West. United States: Macthette Books. ISBN 9781401305581.



Churches were often decorated with tapestries of saints, artifacts, crosses, and many other relics. One church had the actual crown of thorns and nails secretly stored and occasionally had it on display.

(16/51)



Roses were a common delight as one walks through the streets of Constantinople. Gardens and hedges with roses were part of the beautiful aesthetics of churches, which owned a lot of land. Extracts from roses provided fragrances and refreshments with rose sugar.

(17/51)



great "houses" - monasteries and merchant companies or families. For example, in 1351 the Panagiotissa convent owned properties located on the hillside below the Phanarion quarter that included houses, a bath, gardens and a vineyard. The great cathedral church of Hagia Sophia owned shops and farms around the city. The people who lived and worked on the land in the city were tenant farmers.

Roses hedges were grown all over the city. These hedges could incorporate multiple types of climbing roses grown together, with the long canes woven in and out. They were highly effective in keeping animals - and robbers - out of cultivated gardens.



On the left is a 6th century Byzantine cosmetics jar in rock crystal, gold filigree and topped with a blue sapphire.

The roses of Constantinople were mentioned by travelers to the city. They were one of the most interesting natural features of the city. Roses were the royal flower for Byzantine gardeners. We know the Byzantine Emperors were avid growers of roses for their flowers, fragrance and medicinal qualities. When the Emperor traveled his entourage packed a special silver cooler with a cover for his rose oil - rhodostagma, which was an extract of roses prepared with honey. Essence of roses was an essential product in the Byzantine pharmacy, rose water is called

zoulápin in Byzantine Greek.

The Byzantines were the first to make rose sugar, which was a popular medieval sweet. Rose water also was mixed with salep, a flour made from crushed orchid tubers, and drunk as a fortifying beverage as early as the seventh century in Constantinople.

pallasweb.com/deesis/the-roses-of-constantinople.html

People within and beyond the city took the aesthetics of God's house seriously. A nun challenged the order of an Iconoclastic emperor to remove relics from a Church, and was executed. Theodosia was martyred as a Saint and had a beautiful monastery named after her.

(18/51)

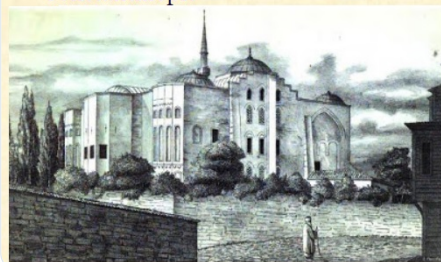


On January 19, 729, at the very beginning of the iconoclastic persecutions, Emperor Leo III the Isaurian ordered the removal of an image of Christ which stood over the Chalkē Gate, the main gate of the Great Palace of Constantinople. While an officer was executing the order, a group of women gathered to prevent the operation, and one of them, a nun named Theodosia, let him fall from the ladder. The man died, and Theodosia was captured and executed.

After the end of Iconoclasm, Theodosia was recognized as a martyr and saint, and her body was kept and venerated in the Church of Saint Euphemia in the Petrio, in the quarter named Dexiokratiana, after the houses owned here by one Dexiokrates. The church and adjoining monastery were erected by Emperor Basil I at the end of the ninth century. The monastery hosted his four daughters, who were all buried in the church. Saint Euphemia lay near the Monastery of Christos Evergetēs, whose foundation date is unknown. It is only known that it was restored by protosevastos John Komnenos, son of Andronikos I Komnenos and brother of co-emperor John, who died fighting in the battle of Myriokephalon in 1176. On April 12, 1204, during the Fourth Crusade, the Latin fleet gathered in front of the Monastery of the Evergetes before attacking the city. During the Latin Empire, the navy had its anchorage in front of the monastery, and the naval port was kept there by Michael VIII Palaiologos also after the restoration of the Byzantine Empire. Many sacred relics kept in the church were looted by the Crusaders and many still exist in churches throughout western Europe.

johnsanidopoulos.com/2011/05/monastery-of-saint-theodosia-in.html

The Monastery of Saint Theodosia In Constantinople



In 905 CE, Leo VI hosted muslim ambassadors to discuss exchange of prisoners. He

took them inside in the Hagia Sophia and showed them relics that were considered highly sacred. Leo VI received a huge public backlash. No emperor was above the sanctity of the Church.

(19/51)

In Spring 905, Constantine's father Leo VI, received Muslim ambassadors from Abd al-Baqi of Tarsus in Constantinople to discuss an exchange of prisoners. Leo had won a great victory over the Emirate of Tarsus in 900 destroying their army and capturing the emir himself. The son of the emir was a part of this mission. Leo treated the ambassadors with great hospitality during their stay in the city in part by showering them with luxuries. Though his staff of the bedchamber Leo provided the ambassadors with, "vine flower scent and rosewater, musk, fragrant essences and other perfumes. They washed with the chased silver basins and ewers that were there, and they dried themselves with very precious hand-towels, and they were generously anointed with perfumed oils and sweet-smelling essences and unguents." During a reception for them in the Chrysotriklinos of the palace, surrounded by gold and silver furniture in a chamber hung with gold curtains, the floor was strewn with myrtle, rosemary and roses. Leo VI then took them to Hagia Sophia, which had bedecked with flowers in their honor, and showed them the liturgical vessels, vestments and crosses from the Treasury of the church. This created a scandal because non-believers were conducted through Hagia Sophia and then shown sacred objects. Below is a manuscript illustration from the Madrid Chronicle of Skylitzes showing this event. It's interesting to notice that the columns are black and have gilded ornament in their arches. The Muslim ambassadors would have been escorted along one of the aisles - probably the north aisle - and shown the items from the Treasury near the great red porphyry columns of the northeast exedra. The white marble arcades above the columns were gilded, so it really could be showing the event. Pilgrims and visitors to Hagia Sophia were routed from the inner narthex into Hagia Sophia along this route. The Treasury was also on the northeast side of the church. When the mission ended the son of the emir was so impressed by his reception and the luxuries of the city that he wanted to stay longer, even to stay as some sort of diplomatic mission, but his father demanded he return to his own land.

pallasweb.com/deesis/the-roses-of-constantinople.html



However, the East's practice of faith became less practical and too philosophical. Instead of learning from mistakes and the lessons from the Bible, they tend to attribute everything to God including the failures of many emperors and the lack of duty among the people.

(20/51)

St. Sophia in cross-section

The Byzantines lived their spiritual life with an intensity hardly matched in the history of Christendom. The stability of the empire was at times threatened by the number of army officers who retired to monasteries, and theological issues were debated on the streets with a passion that led to riots. "The city is full of workmen and slaves who are all theologians," reported one irritated visitor. "If you ask a man to change money he will tell you how the Son differs from the Father. If you ask the price of a loaf he will argue that the Son is less than the Father. If you want to know if the bath is ready you are told that the Son was made out of nothing." Was Christ one or many? Was the Holy Spirit descended just from the Father or from the Father and the Son? Were icons idolatrous or holy? These were not idle questions: salvation or damnation hung on the answers. Issues of orthodoxy and heresy were as explosive as civil wars in the life of the empire, and they undermined its unity just as effectively.

The world of Byzantine Christianity was also strangely fatalistic. Everything was ordained by God, and misfortune on any scale, from the loss of a purse to a major siege, was considered to be the result of personal or collective sin. The emperor was appointed at God's bidding, but if he were overthrown in a palace coup - hacked to death by plotters or stabbed in his bath or strangled or dragged along behind horses or just blinded and sent into exile - (for imperial fortunes were notoriously unstable), this was God's will too and betokened some hidden sin. And because fortune was foretold, the Byzantines were superstitiously

Roger Crowley (2013). 1453: The Holy War for Constantinople and the Clash of Islam and the West. United States: Hachette Books. ISBN 9781401305581.

Christian Europe was united once but differences in customs (use of unleavened bread) resulted in a bitter power struggle. In 1054, the Latin Western Church split with the Greek Orthodox Church. The disunity would have serious repercussions in centuries to come.

(21/51)

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East-West_Schism

britannica.com/event/East-West-Schism-1054

britannica.com/event/East-West-Schism-1054

Roger Crowley (2013). 1453: *The Holy War for Constantinople and the Clash of Islam and the West*. United States: Hachette Books. ISBN 9781401305581.

Second Siege of Constantinople 717-718 - HistoryNet

(23/51)



Emerging was a growing enemy, the Turks, with razor sharp instinct for warfare due to hostile environments from invading tribes. Their combat superiority stemmed from their tactical ability to use a bow and arrow with deadly precision while swiftly riding a horse.

(24/51)

Byzantium suffered the repeated depredations of these Turkic nomads long before it knew the name. The earliest Turks to impact on settled Greek speakers were probably the Huns, who surged across the Christian world in the fourth century; they were followed in turn by the Bulgars, each successive wave inexplicable as a plague of locusts devastating the land. The Byzantines attributed these visitations to God's punishment for Christian sin. Like their cousins the Mongols, the Turkic peoples lived in the saddle between the great earth and the greater sky and they worshiped both through the intermediary of shamans. Restless, mobile, and tribal, they lived by herding flocks and raiding their neighbors. Booty was a *raison d'être*, cities their enemy. Their use of the composite bow and the mobile tactics of horse warfare gave them a military

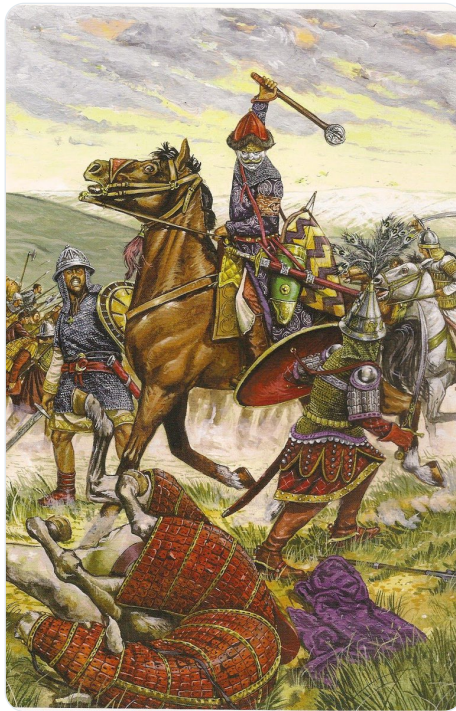
superiority over settled peoples that the Arab historian Ibn Khaldun saw as the key process of history. "Sedentary people have become used to laziness and ease," he wrote. "They find full assurance of safety in the walls that surround them, and the fortifications that protect them." The Bedouins have no gates and walls. They always carry weapons. They watch carefully all sides of the road. They take hurried naps only ... when they are in the saddle. They pay attention to every faint barking and noise. Fortitude has become a character quality of theirs, and courage their nature." It was a theme that would soon re-echo in both the Christian and the Islamic worlds.

Roger Crowley (2013). 2453: The Holy War for Constantinople and the Clash of Islam and the West. United States: Hachette Books. ISBN 9781401305581.



1 of the biggest events that not only demoralized but permanently weakened the Byzantine Empire was the defeat of Manzikert by the Seljuk Turks (few centuries before the Ottoman Empire). Thus began the decline of the Byzantine. So what led to this game-changing defeat?

(25/51)



For the Byzantines the Battle of Manzikert was “the Terrible Day,” a defeat of seismic proportions that was to haunt their future. The effects were catastrophic, though not immediately understood in Constantinople itself. The Turkmen poured into Anatolia unopposed; where they had previously raided and retired again, they now stayed, pushing farther and farther west into the lion’s head of Anatolia. After the hot deserts of Iran and Iraq, the high rolling plateau was a landscape that suited these nomads from central Asia with their yurts and two-humped camels. With them came both the structure of Orthodox Sunni religion and more fervent Islamic strands: Sufis, dervishes, wandering holy men who preached both jihad and a mystical reverence for saints that appealed to the Christian peoples. Within twenty years of Manzikert the Turks had reached the Mediterranean coasts. They were largely unresisted by a mixed Christian population, some of whom converted to Islam, while others were only too glad to be rid of taxation and persecution from Constantinople. Islam held Christians to be “People of the Book”; as such they were afforded protection under the law and freedom of worship. Schismatic Christian sects even gave Turkish rule a positive welcome: “on account of its justice and good government, they prefer to live under its administration” wrote Michael the Syrian, “the Turks, having no idea of the sacred mysteries ... were in no way accustomed to inquire into professions of faith or to persecute anyone on their account, in contrast to the Greeks,” he went on, “a wicked and heretical people.” Internal quarrels in the Byzantine state encouraged the Turks; they were soon invited to help in the civil wars that were fragmenting Byzantium. The conquest of Asia Minor happened so easily and with so little resistance that by the time another Byzantine army was defeated in 1176, the possibility of driving back the incomers had gone forever. Manzikert was irreversible. By the 1220s Western writers were already referring to Anatolia as *Turchia*. Byzantium had lost its resources of food and manpower for good. And at almost the same moment a matching catastrophe overwhelmed Constantinople from a more unexpected quarter – the Christian West.

Roger Crowley (2013). 1453: The Holy War for Constantinople and the Clash of Islam and the West. United States: Hachette Books. ISBN 9781401305581.

Romanos IV became the Emperor in 1067 under circumstances disputed by those with imperial lineage and thus had political enemies. He inherited a poorly trained military & had to hire undisciplined mercenaries. His biggest blunder was underestimating the skilled Turks.

(26/51)



Campaigns against the Turks [edit]

Romanos IV was now the senior emperor and guardian of his stepsons and junior co-emperors, Michael VII, Konstantinos, and Andronikos Doukas.^[7] However, his elevation had antagonised not only the Doukas family, [citation needed] in particular the *Caesar*, John Doukas who led the opposition of the palace officials to Romanos' authority, but also the Varangian Guard, who openly expressed their discontent at the marriage of Eudokia.^[8] Romanos therefore decided that he could only exercise his authority by placing himself at the head of the army in the field, thereby focusing the whole government's attention on the war against the Turks.^[9]

By 1067, the Turks had been making incursions as will into Mesopotamia, Melitene, Syria, Cilicia, and Cappadocia, culminating with the sack of Caesarea and the plundering of the Church of St Basil.^[10] That winter they camped on the frontiers of the empire and waited for the next year's campaigning season. Romanos was confident of Byzantine superiority on the field of battle, looking on the Turks as little more than hordes of robbers who would melt away at the first encounter.^[11] He did not take into account the degraded state of the Byzantine forces,^[12] which had suffered years of neglect from his predecessors. In particular Constantine X Doukas. His forces, mostly composed of Slavonian, Armenian, Bulgarian, and Frankish mercenaries, were ill-disciplined, disorganised, and uncoordinated, and he was not prepared to spend time in upgrading the arms, armour, or tactics of the once-fearful Byzantine army.^[13] It was soon evident that while Romanos possessed military talent, his impetuosity was a serious flaw.^{[14] [citation needed]}



Gold inscription of Romanos IV. Michael VII Doukas flanked by his brothers Andronikos and Konstantinos on the obverse, Romanos IV and Eudokia Makrembolitissa crowned by Christ on the reverse

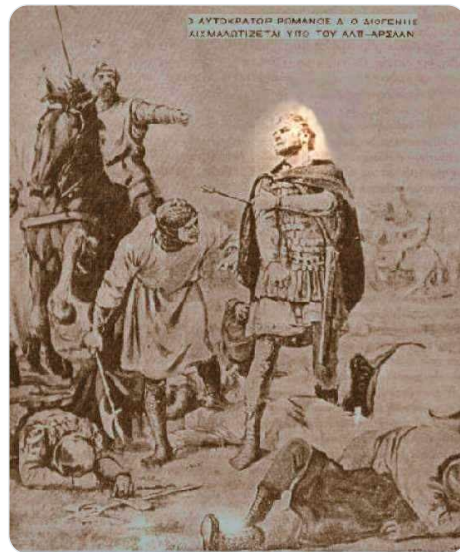
- ↑ Dumbarton Oaks (1973). *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*. Leo II to Nicephorus II. 717–1081. p. 785.
- ↑ Norwich, John Julius (1993). *Byzantium: The Apogee*. Penguin. ISBN 0-14-011449-3.
- ↑ Norwich, John Julius (1993b) [1992]. *Byzantium: The Apogee*. Byzantium, 8.

- ↑ Dumbarton Oaks 1973, p. 785.
- ↑ Foley 1854, p. 31.
- ↑ Norwich 1993, p. 343.
- ↑ Foley 1854, p. 32.
- ↑ Foley 1854, p. 345.

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanos_IV_Diogenes

The treasury of the Byzantine didn't help Romanos as there were high expenditures. French mercenaries protested disciplinary rules and pay delays so they looted countryside Anatolia. This allowed the Turks to take over more territory from the Byzantine empire.

(27/51)



The humiliation didn't just end there. The Byzantine empire was losing city after city; it lost Edessa, Hieropolis, and Antioch and their weak military couldn't quell the invasions.

(30/51)

The Byzantine Empire

The **Byzantine Empire** had long been in control of Jerusalem and other sites holy to Christians but, in the latter decades of the 11th century CE, they lost them dramatically to the Seljuks, a Turkish tribe of the steppe. The Seljuks, already having made several raids into Byzantine territory, shockingly defeated a Byzantine army at the **Battle of Manzikert** in ancient **Armenia** in August 1071 CE. They even captured the Byzantine emperor **Romanos IV Diogenes** (r. 1068-1071 CE), and although he was released for a massive ransom, the emperor also had to hand over the important **cities of Edessa, Hieropolis, and Antioch**. The defeat astonished **Byzantium**, and there followed a scramble for the throne which even Romanos' return to **Constantinople** did not settle. It also meant that many of the Byzantine commanders in **Asia Minor** left their commands to stake their claim for the throne in Constantinople.

Meanwhile, the Seljuks took full advantage of this military neglect and, c. 1078 CE, created the Sultanate of Rum with their capital at Nicaea in Bithynia in northwest Asia Minor, which was captured from the Byzantines in 1081 CE. The Seljuks were even more ambitious, though, and by 1087 CE they controlled Jerusalem.



ancient.eu/article/1249/the-crusades-causes--goals/

Here, you can see how much territory the Byzantine empire lost from 1045 to 1080. After the loss at Manzikert in 1071, the Byzantine empire was so weakened that it could no longer effectively repel further invasions from the East.

(31/51)



The Byzantine faced another embarrassing loss in the Battle of Myriokephalon in 1176. This embarrassment is attributed to the miscalculations of Emperor Manuel I Komnenos, who was a degenerate unable to control his sexual appetite.

(32/51)





Among Manuel's many affairs was a relationship with his own niece, Theodora, who often toyed with the emperor. The palace was essentially used to house his concubine. Given Manuel's lax morals on sex, he sanctioned prostitution and brothels in the Christian city.

(33/51)



Manuel managed to live a private life within the Great Palace surrounded by servants and priests. There were many private entrances and hidden corridors within the palace where you could smuggle people in. Manuel had a serious problem, a sexual addiction which must have been begun when he was a teenager and was introduced to women on campaign with his dad. Women; wives, girl friends and prostitutes - thousands of them - followed in the wake of the Byzantine army. Some of them would have been beautiful, high-class courtesans attached to the officer corps. These women could have been well-educated and might have been even selected for Manuel to introduce him to sexuality. Later, Manuel had many mistresses, including his own niece, Theodora, who he had a daughter with. It was thought his face bore the marks of sexual dissolution on it. When he was emperor Manuel was able to conduct his sexual affairs within the palace and his close circle of friends. It is hard to imagine what the church must have thought of this. It was not as bad as consorting with astrologers but it he was a married man. He had a difficult time securing a male heir, in part because he was sowing his wild oats with any women who was not his wife. It must of occurred to Manuel that he was cursed because of his sexual sins and that was the reason he could not get an heir.

[pallasweb.com/deesis/great-palace-of-constantinople-12th-century.html](https://www.pallasweb.com/deesis/great-palace-of-constantinople-12th-century.html)

It was commonly believed that the palace was full of loose women who debauched the Emperor with their beauty and seductiveness. You could see women in the palace from the city watching the nearby streets and forums from windows and terraces above. One can imagine the stories that were told about them and what went on in the palace between Manuel and his niece Theodora. It was said that she refused to visit Manuel in the palace unless it had just been thoroughly cleaned and swept out for her. She loved to stir things up in advance of her arrival and see the effect of her power over the servants. People said he handed over vast sums of money to the illegitimate son she bore him. It is amazing that in such a religious society, Manuel and Theodora managed to get away with their relationship without the censure of the church.

The city government licensed brothels, we know some of them were located near the forum of Constantine right in the center of the city. The brothels were world famous and one of the top attractions for male visitors, like crusader soldiers and merchants. As a private trade prostitution was widespread among widows who operated out of their homes and apartments.

<https://www.pallasweb.com/deesis/great-palace-of-constantinople-12th-century.html>

(34/51)

(35/51)

(36/51)

Manuel attempted to forge personal relations with the Turkish Islamic dynasts of the East with less success. He brought them as guests into the palace and spend huge sums of money entertaining them there. Manuel even learned Turkish and had a sincere sympathy for their religion. To the honor of the Crusaders who visited the city Constantinople had a large mosque and regular Islamic services.

In 1162 Manuel made the serious mistake of trusting the Turkish Sultan Arslan and deluding himself that their personal friendship was something more than what it was:

"Manuel, who knew that no barbarian is able to resist the temptation of gain, wished to magnify himself and to astound Kilij Arslan with the immense riches of the treasures which overflowed on all sides of the Roman empire, and thus he displayed all the gifts which he proposed to offer the sultan in one of the palace's splendid men's apartments. These consisted of gold and silver coins, luxurious raiment, silver beakers, golden Thierkeian vessels, linens of the finest weave, and other choice ornaments which were easily procured by the Romans but rare among the barbarians and hardly ever seen by them. On entering the men's apartments to which he had summoned the sultan, the emperor inquired if he wished to receive as gifts the contents of the treasury at hand. When the sultan replied that he would take whatever the emperor offered him, the emperor posed a second question, asking if any of the enemies of the Romans could possibly withstand their assault should he pour such treasures on mercenary and native troops"

pallase.com/deesis/great-palace-of-constantinople-12th-century.html

"Seized with wonder and answering that were he the master of such vast sums of money he would have subjugated his enemies long ago, the emperor said, 'I present you with all these treasures so that you may know my generosity and munificence and that he who is lord over such wealth is he who grants so much to one man.' The sultan was delighted and astonished at the outpouring of money and, blinded by the desire of gain, promised to hand over Sebasteia and its lands to the emperor. Manuel gladly welcomed this promise and agreed to give him more money should he confirm his words by deeds."

When the Sultan arrived in the city he was personally escorted by Manuel, who received the sultan wearing a specially made garment, a purple robe on which a "meadow" was embroidered in rubies and pearls, supposedly an Islamic motif the Sultan would appreciate. Arslan visited the city for 80 days, attending a triumph as well as races and other festivities in his honor held in the Hippodrome. Manuel had planned to show the Sultan Hagia Sophia but an earthquake shook the city and it was called off. A treaty was concluded whereby the emperor ritually adopted the sultan as his son and undertook to subsidize his wars against his Turkish rivals; in return, any important cities recovered from the latter were to be surrendered to the emperor, and the sultan promised to prevent raids on the empire's territories.

pallase.com/deesis/great-palace-of-constantinople-12th-century.html

Emperor Manuel's inviting the turks and showing off his wealth was the same exact mistake King Hezekiah made in showing the King of Babylon, who was an enemy, all the gold & silver in Jerusalem. See Isaiah 39. Constantinople was sacked & stripped of its wealth in 1204.

(37/51)

Isaiah 39:1–8

 The New King James Version

The Babylonian Envoys

39 At ^athat time ¹Merodach-Baladan the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that he had been sick and had recovered. ² And Hezekiah was pleased with them, and showed them the house of his treasures—the silver and gold, the spices and precious ointment, and all his armory—all that was found among his treasures. There was nothing in his house or in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them.

³ Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah, and said to him, "What did these men say, and from where did they come to you?"

So Hezekiah said, "They came to me from a 'far country, from Babylon.'"

⁴ And he said, "What have they seen in your house?"

So Hezekiah answered, "They have seen all that is in my house; there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shown them."

⁵ Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the LORD of hosts: ⁶ 'Behold, the days are coming 'when all that is in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,' says the LORD. ⁷ 'And they shall take away *some* of your ^esons who will descend from you, whom you will beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.' "

⁸ So Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The word of the LORD which you have spoken is good!" For he said, "At least there will be peace and truth in my days."

<https://bible.com/bible/nkjv/isaiah/39>

The Turks happily took all the gold foolishly given by Manuel I and did not honor the agreement. Manuel went to battle for the dishonor and ran a sloppy military offensive in which his army suffered. He was defeated and humiliated at Myriokephalon. He never recovered.

(38/51)

Kilij Arslan II and the Seljuk Turks

Further information: Battle of Myriokephalon



This image by Gualtiero Coste shows the Turkish ambush at the pass of Myriokephalon. This ambush destroyed Manuel's hopes of capturing Konysa.

Between 1155–1162, a series of Byzantine campaigns against the Seljuk Turks of the Sultanate of Rûm resulted in a treaty favourable to the Empire. According to the agreement, certain frontier regions, including the city of Sivas, should be handed over to Manuel in return for some quantity of cash, while it also obliged the Seljuk Sultan Kilij Arslan II to recognize his overlordship.^[1] Kilij Arslan II used the peace with Byzantium, and the power vacuum caused by the death in 1174 of Nur ad-Din Zengi the ruler of Syria, to expel the Danishmends from their Anatolian emirates. When the Seljuk sultan refused to cede some of the territory he had taken from the Danishmends to the Byzantines, as he was obliged to do as part of his treaty obligations, Manuel decided that it was time to deal with the Turks once and for all.^[2] Therefore, he assembled the full imperial army and marched against the Seljuk capital, Iconium (Konya).^[3] Manuel's strategy was to prepare the advanced bases of Dorylaeum and Sublaeum, and then to use them to strike as quickly as possible at Iconium.^[4]

Yet Manuel's army of 35,000 men was large and unwieldy – according to a letter that Manuel sent to King Henry II of England, the advancing column was ten miles (16 km) long.^[5] Manuel marched against Iconium via Laodicea, Chonae, Lampe, Celsaene, Choma, and Antioch. Just outside the entrance to the pass at Myriokephalon, Manuel was met by Turkish ambassadors, who offered peace on generous terms. Most of Manuel's generals and experienced courtiers urged him to accept the offer. The younger and more aggressive members of the court urged Manuel to attack, however, and he took their advice and continued his advance.^[4]

24. ^[1] ^[2] ^[3] ^[4] ^[5] ^[6] ^[7] ^[8] ^[9] ^[10] ^[11] ^[12] ^[13] ^[14] ^[15] ^[16] ^[17] ^[18] ^[19] ^[20] ^[21] ^[22] ^[23] ^[24] ^[25] ^[26] ^[27] ^[28] ^[29] ^[30] ^[31] ^[32] ^[33] ^[34] ^[35] ^[36] ^[37] ^[38] ^[39] ^[40] ^[41] ^[42] ^[43] ^[44] ^[45] ^[46] ^[47] ^[48] ^[49] ^[50] ^[51] ^[52] ^[53] ^[54] ^[55] ^[56] ^[57] ^[58] ^[59] ^[60] ^[61] ^[62] ^[63] ^[64] ^[65] ^[66] ^[67] ^[68] ^[69] ^[70] ^[71] ^[72] ^[73] ^[74] ^[75] ^[76] ^[77] ^[78] ^[79] ^[80] ^[81] ^[82] ^[83] ^[84] ^[85] ^[86] ^[87] ^[88] ^[89] ^[90] ^[91] ^[92] ^[93] ^[94] ^[95] ^[96] ^[97] ^[98] ^[99] ^[100] ^[101] ^[102] ^[103] ^[104] ^[105] ^[106] ^[107] ^[108] ^[109] ^[110] ^[111] ^[112] ^[113] ^[114] ^[115] ^[116] ^[117] ^[118] ^[119] ^[120] ^[121] ^[122] ^[123] ^[124] ^[125] ^[126] ^[127] ^[128] ^[129] ^[130] ^[131] ^[132] ^[133] ^[134] ^[135] ^[136] ^[137] ^[138] ^[139] ^[140] ^[141] ^[142] ^[143] ^[144] ^[145] ^[146] ^[147] ^[148] ^[149] ^[150] ^[151] ^[152] ^[153] ^[154] ^[155] ^[156] ^[157] 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Massacre of the Latins

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The **Massacre of the Latins** (Italian: *Massacro dei Latini*; Greek: Σφαγή τῶν Λατίνων) was a large-scale massacre of the Roman Catholic (called "Latin") inhabitants of Constantinople, the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, by the Eastern Orthodox population of the city in April 1182.^{[1][2]}

The Roman Catholics of Constantinople at that time dominated the city's maritime trade and financial sector.^[1] Although precise numbers are unavailable, the bulk of the Latin community, estimated at 60,000 at the time by Eustathius of Thessalonica,^[1] was wiped out or forced to flee. The Genoese and Pisan communities especially were decimated, and some 4,000 survivors were sold as slaves to the (Turkish) Sultanate of Rum.^[1]

The massacre further worsened relations and increased enmity between the Western and Eastern Christian churches,^[1] and a sequence of hostilities between the two followed.

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en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massacre_of_the_Latins

Military, political, and commercial pressure from the west had been building on the Byzantine Empire for a long time, but by the end of the twelfth century it had taken on a very visible shape in Constantinople. A large Italian trading community had been established in the city – the Venetians and Genoese were accorded special privileges and benefited accordingly. The profiteering, materialistic Italians were not popular: the Genoese had their own colony at Galata, a walled town across the Horn; the Venetian colony was considered "so insolent in its wealth and prosperity as to hold the imperial power in scorn." Waves of xenophobia swept the populace; in 1171 Galata was attacked and destroyed by the Greeks. In 1183 the entire Italian community was massacred under the eye of the Byzantine general Andronikos "the Terrible."

Roger Crowley (2013). 1453: The Holy War for Constantinople and the Clash of Islam and the West. United States: Hachette Books. ISBN 9781401305581.

The West took their revenge on the Byzantines for the 1183 Latin Massacre. In 1204, The Crusaders sacked Constantinople and stripped the city of all its wealth. When the Byzantines took back Constantinople after 60 years in exile, it was almost as if nothing was left.

(43/51)

The following April, after a winter of murky internal intrigue during which the crusaders became increasingly restive, Constantinople was comprehensively sacked. An appalling massacre ensued and huge portions of the city were destroyed by fire; "more houses were burned than there are to be found in the three greatest cities of the Kingdom of France," declared the French knight Geoffrey de Villehardouin. The city's great heritage of art was vandalized and St. Sophia profaned and ransacked: "they brought horses and mules into the Church," wrote the chronicler Nicetas, "the better to carry off the holy vessels and the engraved silver and gold that they had torn from the throne and the pulpit, and the doors, and the furniture wherever it was to be found; and when some of these beasts slipped and fell, they ran them through with their swords, fouling the Church with their blood and ordure." The Venetians made off with a great trove of statuary, relics, and precious objects to adorn their own church of St. Mark, including the four bronze horses that had stood in the Hippodrome since the time of Constantine the Great. Constantinople was left a smoking ruin. "Oh city, city, eye of all cities," howled the chronicler Nicetas, "you have drunk to the dregs the cup of the anger of the Lord." It was a typical Byzantine response; but whether the agent of this disaster was human or divine, the consequences were the same: Constantinople was reduced to a shadow of its former greatness. For nearly sixty years the city became the "Latin Empire of Constantinople," ruled by the count of Flanders and his successors. The Byzantine empire was dismembered into a scattered collection of Frankish states and Italian colonies, while a large part of the population fled to Greece. The Byzantines established a kingdom in exile at Nicaea in Anatolia and were relatively successful in barring further Turkish incursions. When they recaptured Constantinople in 1261, they found the city's infrastructure close to ruin and its dominions shrunk to a few dispersed fragments. As they tried to restore their fortunes and to face new dangers from the West, the Byzantines again turned their back on Islamic Anatolia, and paid an ever-deepening price.

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The Sack of Constantinople in 1204 CE
by Palma Le Jeune (Public Domain)

In 1204 this history of mutual suspicion and violence returned to haunt Constantinople in a catastrophe for which the Greeks have never fully forgiven the Catholic West. In one of the most bizarre events in the history of Christendom,

the Fourth Crusade, embarked on Venetian ships and nominally bound for Egypt, was diverted to attack the city. The architect of this operation was Enrico Dandolo, the apparently blind, eighty-year-old Venetian doge, a man of infinite guile, who personally led the expedition. Sweeping up a convenient pretender to the imperial throne, the huge fleet sailed up the Marmara in June 1203; the crusaders themselves were perhaps startled to see Constantinople, a city of great Christian significance, forming on the port bow rather than the shores of Egypt. Having smashed their way through the chain that protected the Golden Horn, the Venetian ships rode up onto the foreshore and attempted to breach the sea walls; when the attack faltered, the octogenarian doge leaped down onto the beach with the flag of St. Mark in his hand and exhorted the Venetians to show their valor. The walls were stormed and the pretender, Alexios, duly enthroned.

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The amount of wealth stripped from the Byzantines in 1204: the Crusaders took the bronze horses of the Hippodrome, all religious artifacts & relics (see 16/51), gold accumulated throughout the history of the empire, and architectural items of aesthetic value.

(44/51)



Horses from the Hippodrome of Constantinople
by Tteske (CC BY)

Constantinople, in 1204 CE, had a population of around 800,000, dwarfing the 80,000 in Venice, western Europe's largest city at the time. But it was not only its size that impressed the Crusaders, its buildings, churches and palaces, the huge forums and gardens, and, above all, its riches struck awe in the western visitors. Then awe was swiftly replaced by greed.

Monumental sculptures, countless artworks, books, manuscripts, and jewels which had been steadily accumulated by emperors and nobles over a millennium were all stripped away and either destroyed or melted down for coinage. Furniture, doors, and marble architectural elements were taken away for reuse elsewhere, and even the tombs of emperors, including that of the great Justinian I, were opened up and their precious contents removed.

One of the most precious of all Byzantine religious relics to be stolen was the Mandylion shroud, a cloth or scarf said to have carried an impression of Christ himself. It was taken as a prize to France but, alas, this priceless icon was destroyed during the French

Revolution. In another example, a gold reliquary containing a fragment of the True Cross ended up in the cathedral of Limburg in Germany. The Hippodrome of Constantinople, especially, was looted for all the treasures which stood in the central island around which the chariots raced. The four bronze horses now in St. Mark's Cathedral in Venice were probably once part of a chariot group which stood atop the arena's monumental entrance gate.

ancient.eu/article/1188/1204-the-sack-of-constantinople/

The 1204 sacking of Constantinople left the Byzantine emperor in a crippled state as it lost all its wealth and was rendered so weak that it couldn't manage to protect its provinces in Anatolia. But this loss will be felt by Europe and the entire West forever.

(45/51)

The world had lost something great and undefinable, as powerfully summarised here by the historian J. J. Norwich:



By the sack of Constantinople, Western **civilization** suffered a loss greater than the burning of the library of **Alexandria** in the fourth century or the sack of **Rome** in the fifth - perhaps the most catastrophic single loss in all history. (306)

The Turks under a leader named Osman, father of the Ottoman Empire, went on a series of conquests capturing territory from the Byzantine: Bursa in 1326; Pelekanos in 1329; Nicaea in 1331; Nicomedia & Pergamon in 1337; Scutari in 1338; and Thrace & Gallipoli in 1353.

(46/51)

No one knows the true origins of these people, whom we now call Ottomans. They emerge from among the anonymous wandering Turkmen sometime around 1280, a caste of illiterate warriors living among tents and woodsmoke, who ruled from the saddle and signed with a thumbprint and whose history was subsequently reconstructed by imperial myth-making. Legend tells that Osman was always destined for greatness. One night he fell asleep and had a dream, in which he saw Constantinople, which, "situated at the junction of two seas and two continents, seemed like a diamond mounted between two sapphires and two emeralds, and appeared thus to form the precious stone of the ring of a vast dominion which embraced the entire world." Osman took upon himself the mantle of the gazis, which his tribe was poised to exploit. Luck and quick-wittedness in equal measure were to transform the realm of Osman from a tiny principality to the world power of the dream.

The domain of Osman, in northwestern Anatolia, directly confronted the Byzantine defensive perimeter that guarded Constantinople. Facing unconquered infidel land, it became a magnet for gazis, adventurers, and land-hungry refugees who wanted to try their luck under his command. Osman ruled as a tribal leader in touch with his people. At the same time the Ottomans had a unique opportunity to study the neighboring Byzantine state and to imitate its structures. The tribe learned literally "on the hoof," absorbing technologies, protocols, and tactics at an extraordinary rate. In 1302 Osman won a first victory over the Byzantines that brought prestige and recruits to his cause. Pushing forward against the crumbling imperial defenses, he managed to isolate the city of Bursa; lacking the technology for sieges, it took a patient seven years of blockade before his son Orhan captured the city in 1326 and secured a capital for his small kingdom. In 1329 Orhan

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defeated the emperor Andronikos III at Pelekanos, ending all Byzantine attempts to support its remaining Anatolian cities. They fell in quick succession - Nicaea in 1331, Nicomedia in 1337, Scutari the following year. Muslim warriors were now able to ride their horses to the sea's edge on their own lands and look out across the Bosphorus at Europe. On the far side they could make out Constantinople: the marching line of its sea walls, the enormous dome of St. Sophia, imperial banners fluttering from turrets and palaces.

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BLACK SEA



In 1439, there was a short-lived truce to quash centuries of bitterness and differences between the Byzantines and the West. The East didn't want to face the reality of their weak position, and refused to submit to the Pope. This arrogant decision sealed their fate.

(47/51)

During the Late Byzantine period, church authorities made efforts to unify the Latin and Greek churches. After the Fourth Crusade of 1204, the break between the two churches was considered definitive. For two centuries, various attempts were made to reconcile the breach, but the Latin domination of Byzantium and certain theological issues rendered these aspirations ineffective. In 1274, Michael VIII Palaiologos and Pope Gregory X held the Council of Lyon to discuss a formal union. Michael's representatives swore obedience to the Roman church and its faith. While politically useful, great resistance within the Byzantine population spurred repudiation of the settlement eleven years later. Another meeting occurred in 1439, when Pope Eugenius IV met with Emperor John VIII Palaiologos. The emperor brought with him the most esteemed Byzantine intellectuals of the day, including Joseph II and Bessarion, who would remain in Italy promoting the cause of union after being ordained a Roman cardinal. Meeting in Ferrara until an outbreak of the plague forced the assembly to move to Florence, the members debated issues such as primal papacy and purgatory. Political as well as theological issues were at stake. The papacy hoped for political subordination of the Byzantine empire. The Byzantines wanted military aid against the Turks. The union decree of the July 6, 1439, proved ephemeral and, after the collapse of the empire, the Byzantine church renounced the agreement.

metmuseum.org/toah/hd/rbw/hd_rbw.htm

Encyclopedia Britannica

Council of Ferrara-Florence, ecumenical council of the Roman Catholic church (1438–45) in which the Latin and Greek churches tried to reach agreement on their doctrinal differences and end the schism between them. The council ended in an agreed decree of reunion, but the reunion was short-lived. The Council of Ferrara-Florence was not a new council but was the continuation of the Council of Basel, which Pope Eugenius IV transferred from Basel and which opened in Ferrara on Jan. 8, 1438. The Greek delegation, numbering about 700, included the patriarch of Constantinople Joseph II, 20 metropolitans, and the Byzantine emperor John VIII Palaeologus.

Discussions were held on purgatory and on the phrase *Filioque* ("and from the Son") of the Nicene Creed, which sets forth the doctrine that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son. The Greeks held that the Spirit proceeds from the Father only and had refused to accept the *Filioque*.

On Jan. 10, 1439, the council was moved from Ferrara to Florence when a plague hit Ferrara. After much discussion, the Greeks agreed to accept the *Filioque* and also the Latin statements on purgatory, the Eucharist, and papal primacy. The decree of union between the two groups (*Laetentur Caeli*) was signed on July 6, 1439. After their return to Constantinople, many of the Greeks repudiated the reunion. Meanwhile, the Latins completed union agreements with certain other Eastern churches. No extant document records the closing of the council, which moved to Rome in September 1443.

britannica.com/event/Council-of-Ferrara-Florence

By 1359, the Ottomans laid their 1st siege of Constantinople but failed. With no aid from the West, the Byzantines' only defense was their strong fortified wall which repelled two other sieges in 1402 & 1422. On May 29, 1453, Constantinople fell to the Ottoman muslims.

(48/51)



From there onwards the destinies of the Turks and the Byzantines were always connected in one way or another, even if the Seljuks were overthrown by the Mongol invasion of Hugal, and replaced by another Turkish tribe, if possible even more fierce, the Ottomans one, from the name of their first Lord Osman, Othman.

The war between the Eastern Roman Empire and the Ottoman Empire, with the exception of short periods of non-belligerency, did not have many stops, and went ahead with a series of defeats of the Byzantines: In 1331 fell Nicaea, Pergamon, Nicomedia; Thrace was plundered in 1363, Gallipoli was taken, and in 1359 the Turks arrived up to the walls of Constantinople and captured Adrianople, also in Thrace, where the Sultan immediately moved his capital.

The ability of the Turks however was not only military, but indeed to taking advantage of the rivalry of the Balkan peoples (Serbs, Greeks, Bulgarians) to consolidate their power, so that their military superiority would become increasingly overwhelming. The crusade launched by urban V in 1363 (in which were involved Hungary, Serbia, Bosnia and Wallachia) failed, as failed others attempts to unite the Balkan forces against the Turkish threat. With the defeats in Serbia's Kosovo (1389) and Varna (1444), in which the King Ladislaus of Hungary and Cardinal Cesarini died, definitively ends the attempting to organized a united resistance, while the Ottomans followed their action by snatching Thessaloniki to Venice and coming to Albania and Hungary.

http://www.ansbellis.it/pagine/medieval/Constantinopoli/constantinopoli_eng.html

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CONSTANTINOPLE

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The Byzantines

The Roman Empire was now Greek as well, and was divided from the rest of Europe for reasons, politics and above all religion, because of the Eastern Schism of 1054 that hopelessly separated the Greek Orthodox Church and the Catholic Latin. The highest point of this division was the third crusade (1204) that had resulted in the overthrow of the Greek emperors and the creation of the Latin Empire which lasted until 1261, when Michael VIII Palaeologus recaptured the throne.

Forced to fight in full solitude against the Serbs, Bulgarians and Tatars the new Empire was unable to reach the power of previous centuries. But the most dangerous opponent always remained the Turkish Empire. In 1402 in fact Constantinople was again under siege. This time intervened, providential, the Timur's invasion, that defeated the Turkish army at Angora and once captured Sultan Bayazid, came up to Smyrna, frightening Europeans and Byzantine before returning abruptly Samarkand with his Mongols.

Europeans and Greeks were not, however, able to take advantage of the prostration in which had fallen the Turks: France and England continued fighting in the 'hundred years war', the Habsburg empire was convulsed by the Hussite heresy while the Italian states fought for supremacy in their peninsula. So the Sultan Mehmed I (Muhammad I) was able to restore the order in his Kingdom, and his successor, **Murad II besieged Constantinople again in 1422**, forcing the Emperor John VIII to pay him a tribute.

The capital was once again saved, but shortly after Murad II, thanks to the victory over Ladislaus of Hungary at Varna, he extended and consolidated its European domains cutting each terrestrial communication via between the city and the rest of the world.

In 1451, at his death, on the throne would be the 21-year-old son Mehmed II that would have succeeded in taking Constantinople and become so "the Conqueror".

http://www.ambellusa.it/joomla/media/wall/Constantinople/constantinople_eng.html

Of course, there was a certain small element within the walls of Constantinople that betrayed its host by leaving a gate unlocked for the Ottoman muslims to enter and breach the wall. But that is an entire separate thread that will be coming soon.

(49/51)

The final assault took place on May 29 in several waves of troops that attacked the western wall at its weakest points. The Turks found an unlocked gate and rushed into the city, and in the melee that followed Constantine XI died. The Turks renamed the city Istanbul and converted the Hagia Sophia, the great cathedral built under the Byzantine emperor Justinian, into the mosque. The last Byzantine strongholds in Greece were conquered in 1460. Istanbul remained the capital of the Ottoman Empire until this state was dissolved after World War I.

<https://www.encyclopedia.com/arts/arts-construction-medicine-science-and-technology-magazines/fall-constantinople>

Truth is pride killed the Byzantines. They relied too heavily on their wall and neglected their military for centuries. They accepted every result of their actions as being God's wrath, but failed to learn from mistakes or even the practical word of the Holy Bible.

(50/51)

***When pride cometh,
then cometh shame;
but with the lowly is
wisdom.***

- Proverbs 11:2 KJV

***Pride goeth before
destruction, and a
haughty spirit before
a fall.***

- Proverbs 16:18 KJV

The Byzantines could've saved Constantinople by uniting with an old enemy, their Christian brothers in the West, but refused to let go of their bitterness. Perhaps, this

is why Jesus said “Love your enemy” for God may send a far worse enemy for failing to do so.

(51/51)

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.

- Matthew 5:44 KJV

Also, please check out my other threads. I will provide the URLs in the following tweets.

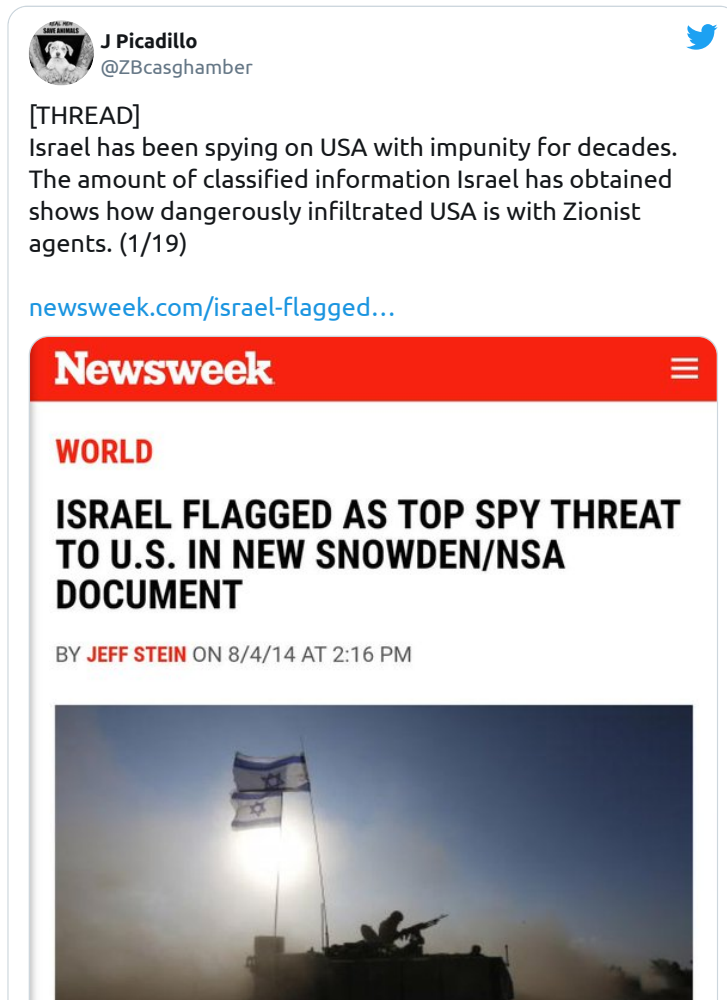
A thread on Haiti and the parallels of its history and the current US:



A thread on Jewish Ritual Murders:



A thread on the history of Israeli espionage and theft of military weapons technology in the USA:



3:25 AM · Apr 20, 2020

89

58 people are Tweeting about this

A thread on a sermon given by Pastor Chuck Baldwin of Liberty Fellowship providing Biblical support to fight against the growing tyranny of the US government.



J Picadillo

@ZBcasghamber

[Thread]

Pastor Chuck Baldwin of Liberty Fellowship in Montana goes full skull-mask mode in one of his best ever sermons given on July 13, 2020.

He starts off by reminding us that the Christian founding fathers and forebearers gave us “a republic if you can keep it.”

[1/15]



5:05 AM · Jul 15, 2020

8

See J Picadillo's other Tweets

[@threadreaderapp](#) unroll, please.

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